

Ruskin Sports College – A Community High School

Ruskin Road, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7JT

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and governors have worked hard to develop a shared understanding among all staff of the capability of all students to achieve well. Leaders at all levels now focus on improving students' progress. This is resulting in improving achievement across the school.
- Subject and pastoral leaders are effectively playing their parts in ensuring that students develop the skills to progress well.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is consistently good because they are eager to learn. They respond positively to teachers' instructions and engage well, supporting each other in their learning.
- The pastoral care for students is good and the procedures to help them stay safe are effective. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this leads to a cohesive and calm school community.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. They have good subject knowledge and use this to generate a curiosity and an eagerness to learn among students. This is helping to secure good achievement.
- Students, given their starting points, are making good progress in both English and mathematics. Their performance in a range of subjects is improving on previous years.
- Students for whom English is an additional language are making exceptional progress because of the excellent support and guidance they receive from staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that students have the necessary skills, knowledge or understanding to secure outstanding progress.
- Homework set is not always consolidating learning or preparing students for their next stage of learning, nor does it consistently develop a curiosity and eagerness to learn.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across a wide range of subjects and year groups between Years 7 to 10. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also attended an assembly and a tutor session.
- Year 11 students were undertaking examinations or on study leave during the inspection, although a few made themselves available to speak to inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, subject leaders, leaders responsible for different aspects of the school’s work, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with Her Majesty’s Inspector who worked with the school over the past two years.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s self-evaluations of its own performance, its development plans, records of the school’s quality of teaching, information about students’ progress, attendance and safeguarding documents. Samples of students’ work were reviewed.
- Inspectors considered the views of the responses of 26 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also those of a 100 parents who responded to the school’s own survey.

Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector
Linda Foley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- There are slightly more boys than girls on roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through the pupil premium, is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students known to be eligible free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of students are White British. A higher than average proportion of students is from minority ethnic groups, the largest of whom are Other White from a range of Eastern European countries. A higher than average proportion of students speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- There are three alternative providers of education used by the school for a small number of students. Reaseheath College and Sandbach High School Sixth Form College are used for vocational courses. The local authority support for off-site education is used for one student.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students who leave or join the school at other than the usual time at the start of Year 7 is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement for all students, through improving the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
 - ensuring that students engage more effectively by helping them to develop the skills that will assist them to take fuller responsibility for their own learning
 - ensuring that homework consolidates students' knowledge and skills and thus prepares them effectively for the next stage in their learning, and generates an eagerness and enjoyment of learning
 - more effectively sharing the good and outstanding practice that is evident across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors are working hard to develop a shared understanding of the potential for all students to do exceptionally well in spite of their circumstances and starting points. This aspirational view is developing strongly across the school and driving strategies to support students to achieve well.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong across the school. Leaders in the school carry out a robust and supportive monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on student achievement on a regular basis. Progress toward challenging targets for all students is monitored frequently, formally at whole-school level and as part of the regular professional way in which teachers work in their departments.
- Middle leaders take responsibility for their areas and show an understanding of appropriate priorities to move the quality of teaching and achievement of students forward. They are enthusiastic about their work, committed and skilled enough to make a difference. Support is provided both inside and outside the classroom for those students identified as falling behind in their work. Staff morale in the school is high.
- The focus on closing achievement gaps between different groups of students in the school and others nationally is good. The underachievement of girls has been tackled and the gap between their and boys' achievement addressed. Good support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving their achievement. The good use of pupil premium funding is reducing any gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students other students, both within the school and nationally.
- The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all students. There is a strong promotion of literacy. Every curriculum area provides opportunities for students to undertake extended writing. Daily opportunities for reading are available through the initiative 'everyone reads in class' and through other programmes. Many students read regularly at home. Mathematics development is linked to appropriate topics in different curriculum areas.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme, assemblies and tutor sessions. This is also well used to promote students' understanding and experience of British values. The school makes full use of the community police to apprise students of new and emerging risks. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are provided to further support students' personal development and enjoyment of learning.
- Arrangements to secure appropriate placements for a small number of students who benefit from alternative provision are negotiated with other institutions. The progress, attendance, behaviour and safety of these students are regularly monitored. These students are making progress in a range of vocational and skills-based courses. They secure opportunities in further education, employment or training at the end of their studies.
- Support for those for whom English is an additional language is well structured and effective. It supports both the welfare of students and their educational needs and, as a result, they achieve extremely well compared to their peers nationally. The local authority holds up the school's work in this area as an example of good practice and uses it to support other local schools.
- This school's promotion of equal opportunities is good and, through very effective pastoral care and the PHSE programme, successfully fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination robustly. Leaders provide effective careers advice and guidance.
- Leaders' willingness to seek out and explore good practice in other institutions is helping it to improve the school's own practices to support students' progress. An example of this is the very much more effective support now in place for students for whom English is an additional language.
- Relationships with the local authority are positive and the school participates in initiatives involving all schools in the local authority. Useful support for the teaching of English has been given by the local authority to support a temporary leader in the department.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding arrangements are taken seriously and met. The school is responsive to new dangers, such as 'legal highs', radicalisation and social media and ensures staff, governors and students are made aware of risks and how to stay safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make a positive contribution to the drive for improving the quality of teaching and securing better achievement for students. They keep up-to-date with new developments and undertake training as necessary. Governors have ensured that as a group they have the necessary skills and expertise to support and challenge the school. Effective use is made of a governor with current inspection experience who works alongside senior leaders to support and monitor students' progress in relatively weaker curriculum areas. The governing body meetings are scheduled in the school day to allow them to elicit both staff and students' opinion. Opinions of different groups of students are regularly sought as a

standing item for the teaching and standards committee.

- Governors appropriately monitor teachers' salary progression to ensure that it is linked to the targets set for them in respect of the quality of their teaching and achievement of students. The expenditure of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been made explicit and governors know about the positive impact it has been having.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They arrive on time to their lessons, quickly settle down, and actively engage in the activities planned by the teacher. They demonstrate an eagerness to learn, especially when teachers have captured their curiosity. Students work well individually and in groups. They willingly help each other and are not afraid to ask questions. Attitudes to learning are good in a range of subjects and year groups.
- The impact of this good behaviour is most effective in securing good or better achievement when teachers have supported students in building the skills needed to tackle the work on their own. Not all teachers consistently do this.
- Students are polite and courteous to visitors and each other. They engage sensibly with each other during break and lunch times. Movement around the school is safe, in spite of narrow corridors, and students are sensitive to the needs of others.
- Students' attendance is above the national average. Students are proud of their school; they come smartly dressed and appropriately equipped for lessons. This pride extends to presentation in their books and their conduct around the school.
- Parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, and the survey conducted by the school, overwhelmingly believe behaviour in the school is good.
- No concerns have been reported about the attendance and behaviour of those on alternative provision.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students in formal and informal situations say they feel very safe in the school. They feel there is hardly any bullying; on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, staff deal with it supportively and effectively. Students can readily relate what they should do to stay safe when using social networking sites and mobile communications. They feel they can readily access support from school staff if needed. Students are aware of inappropriate language, how to stay safe when crossing railway lines and generally outside school because of the regular input of police officers to assemblies and PSHE programmes. They know about how to stay healthy and avoid risks related to modern day drugs.
- The single central record is robustly maintained and policies and procedures for maintaining safety are well established. Monitoring of students' safety on and off site is carefully undertaken. This applies to the attendance and safety of those on alternative education sites as well.
- All of the small number of parents who responded to the on line questionnaire, Parent View, feel the school keeps their child safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall and is resulting in improving the progress of students in a range of subjects across all year groups. Subject leaders robustly monitor the use of teaching and assessment policies and procedures, leading to greater consistency in the approach used by teachers.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers use their knowledge of students' needs and capabilities to plan activities to engage students. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject to build students' curiosity. The high expectations of staff result in habits being formed that promote good learning. Teachers encourage and help students to articulate their ideas clearly and confidently answer questions. Examples of excellent practice, vivid displays and apt video clips help students to learn well. Students' understanding is checked thoroughly to ensure tasks they are set are appropriate, and shared learning is a positive feature of lessons.
- Learning is less effective when teachers do not ensure students have the skills, knowledge or understanding to help them to do what is needed to secure outstanding progress. In these cases, students are cooperative but are reliant on the teacher. Teachers sometimes expect too much of students, failing to recognise the

barriers students face in making better than good progress.

- Consistent marking and supportive comments, combined with guidance on the next steps in students' learning, are helping students to progress well overall. Where this has the most impact, teachers note students' efforts to respond to their suggestions and either compliment or offer further advice where responses are not accurate. In a few cases, teachers are less vigilant in ensuring that students learn from their mistakes.
- Homework is regularly set and marked, and particularly helps students' learning when it is used to consolidate knowledge and understanding. In the best instances, homework develops further curiosity and an eagerness to learn and explore. This, however, is not consistently the case. Teaching in English and mathematics is consistently good and is positively promoting students' progress in these subjects. Students with English as an additional language receive very good support in class as a result of the training teachers have received and the expertise of teaching assistants.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with standards in English and mathematics that are usually broadly in line with the national average and sometimes lower. Students who join the school at other than at the start of Year 7 sometimes do so with lower standards of attainment. Students currently in the school are making more rapid progress in both English and mathematics, and are attaining standards above those expected for their age. This is supported by evidence in books which shows students are progressing well, even when tackling challenging topics. Students' knowledge, skills and understanding are also improving in a range of subjects and across year groups.
- The proportion of Year 11 students in 2014 gaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, was close to the national average. Robust monitoring of progress and targeted support early in the year have ensured that students are making better progress in a range of subjects. The use of external experts to moderate the assessments of school staff is providing more confidence in the accuracy of the predictions made by teachers.
- Last year, the attainment of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics was a grade behind other students nationally and half a grade behind other students in the school. This year, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other students in the school has narrowed further. Disadvantaged students make slower progress than other students nationally.
- The most-able students in the school continue to do well. Those observed in top sets, in both English and mathematics, are successfully addressing challenging work. In a top Year 10 mathematics group, all students were actively engaged in doing A* questions most successfully. Their books show that they are regularly addressing challenging topics. These students show good potential for securing an A* grade with over two terms left to consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The school caters extremely well for students with English as an additional language. All teachers have had additional training in how to meet their needs. Teachers prepare motivating resources to support these students. They very effectively use specialist teaching assistants to help students access and understand the work. As a result, students make exceptional progress.
- While the school no longer enters students early for examinations at GCSE, it fulfilled its commitment to students to enter them early last year. Overall, this did not affect their achievement and the examination results they gained, supported by effective careers guidance and advice, enabled the vast majority of students to enter appropriate employment, training or further education. All those on vocational courses secured a pass, with the number doing this with merit or distinction in the assessments at the end of their course.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported well. Staff successfully use strategies to support these individuals in the classroom. Teaching assistants are effective because they challenge and support students without doing the work for them. This is supporting them to make better progress.
- The performance of girls last year was worse than that of boys. The school's tracking systems suggest that this gap in achievement will be eradicated this year and reversed on some attainment indicators.
- Students educated at alternative provision succeed in securing vocational qualifications and skills to enable them to move on to further education, employment or training. All those on vocational courses secure a pass, with a number doing this at merit and distinction levels in assessments at the end of the course.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111417
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	462341

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Minshall
Headteacher	Ella Brett
Date of previous school inspection	17 July 2013
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